

[00:00:00.060] - Laura Bates

We have these structures, these institutions within our world that absolutely work against us in that effort. So, you know, whether it's the whether it's the electoral machine of the United States, which enables a man who has been accused of sexual assault by multiple women to become elected president, whether it's the confirmation of a man to the Supreme Court who's been accused of sexual violence, institutionally, we are absolutely at a disadvantage in trying to force people to listen. And you can see that because you can see that this outcry, there's this wave of grief and anguish that women have released in the wake of Sarah Everard disappearance. It happens again and again and again and again. You know, this is not the first time in the last few years we've seen countless periods where something has happened, which has prompted this outpouring of women's anger and fury and fear and sadness and grief alongside their own experiences. And nothing changes.

[00:01:16.460] - Amanda Stanley

Hello and welcome to On the Engender. My name is Amanda Stanley, and this podcast is a discussion recorded just after an online event hosted by Engender and Rape Crisis Scotland with the author Laura Bates around her new book, Men Who Hate Women. We were keen to ask for a few more questions following on from the event itself. And so I'm delighted to see that on the podcast. Today, we are also joined by Kathryn Dawson, the sexual violence prevention coordinator at Rape Crisis Scotland and Emma Ritch, the executive director of Engender. And of course, as ever, I am joined today with my wonderful co-host and host of said upcoming discussion, Alys Mumford.

[00:01:54.560] - Alys Mumford

Hello

[00:01:55.220] - Amanda Stanley

How are you, Alys? I'm good, thank you. Yeah. Yeah. So I hosted this chat with Laura Catherine and Engender's Emma Ritch just after a lunchtime webinar we held, which was really amazing. We were really, really privileged to work with Rape Crisis Scotland and to invite Laura Bates up to speak. And we had five hundred people signed up coming along to hear Laura talk about her book, Men Who Hate Women, and also just issues around misogyny and how we can interrupt that. So yeah, we thought we'd continue with a wee chat with Laura afterwards to make the most of having her so you can you can watch a recording of the event and we'll put that in the show notes. But the podcast was really a chance to dig into some of those issues a little bit more and look closely at the sort of policy perspective around some of the issues she was talking about.

[00:02:46.940] - Amanda Stanley

The week and the week in which it was recorded, obviously, there's a lot of tragic news and infuriating news which is discussed in the interview that's coming up. But Alys, I guess to kick us off before, do you have some positive news that we could begin this episode with before we before we delve into that conversation?

[00:03:04.940] - Alys Mumford

Yes, yeah. Good idea. And it is worth it's worth saying. Yeah, we do discuss some sensitive issues. You know, obviously, we're talking about violence against women and we're talking about some recent news cases, so do listen with care. But this week, things do feel a little bit more more positive for me. And that's partly because think the main thing for me is we've got a sort of indicative roadmap out of lockdown, we're recording this just at the end of March. And we've got some some dates in the calendar of when we might be able to start doing things, of course, if all things go to plan with with the public health measures. So that that's felt like a bit of a weight off. I'm beginning to start tentatively thinking about seeing family I haven't seen in a long, long time. So that's really exciting. And I think that combined with the the days getting a bit longer, hopefully is leading to people feeling a hopeful and also Wales won the Six Nations. So that was great. And the ship is free from the Suez Canal. So all in all, things are pretty exciting this week. Amanda, have you got something positive you can share with us?

[00:04:08.300] - Amanda Stanley

It's really about what the ship represents on a whole, you know, at this point?

[00:04:13.610] - Alys Mumford
It is.

[00:04:16.080] - Amanda Stanley
Yeah. Yeah. I mean, before we started recording, we were just discussing how well we'd run out of food ideas for cooking in our own homes. I yeah, I've been loving the kind of small flash of spring that we had in picking wild garlic and wild leeks and and trying to make things with as much of that as possible, involved in every meal, which has been really lovely. I also won one pound on a scratch card. So

[00:04:39.980] - Alys Mumford
nice.

[00:04:41.060] - Amanda Stanley
Yeah, I'll remember you Alys don't worry. [laughter]

[00:04:45.320]
And yeah I think I've just been enjoying, you know obviously I just moved house, you know, in this recording you say that I'd moved house and things so I wasn't present for it but yeah I just moved house. I've been getting settled. And one thing that I've really loved is, for my birthday, which was back at the beginning of the year, and my best friend had signed me up for a six month British Bake Off subscription box and so amazing. And every month, every month, a challenge arrives in a box with the kind of dry ingredients and a really cute illustrated card of like what you have to bake and how it has to look and yeah, it's like your own baker's challenge every month. And so my first one arrived and I've unpacked everything in my new house. Got this. And I'm just ready to, you know, pretend I'm on Bake Off.

[00:05:31.970] - Alys Mumford
Incredible. Again, baking, baking and the Bake Off has featured on this podcast which I'm always here for. We, my little group of pals who've been watching Bake Off have been feeling like withdrawal effects of not having any bake off. So we've gone back and are watching old series of Junior Bake Off and oh my days. It's adorable. Just the contrast between, like there are some kids that are very much like the adult Bake Off, like 'baking is my life and I will cry if I don't get this...' I don't know words for different types of sponges. But if they don't get it quite right and then there's some that just like, 'well, if I'm not a baker, I'll be an astronaut, and I'm going to put orange sprinkles all over my cake.' It's wonderful. Highly recommend anyone...we're not even on recommendations yet, but I just snuck them in there. Junior Bake Off, God love it.

[00:06:22.200] - Amanda Stanley
We're not sponsored by them. But, you know,

[00:06:24.910] - Alys Mumford
But we could be! Get in touch.

[00:06:26.970] - Alys Mumford
Great. So sorry I've taken this completely off track there, but we are going to now play you this interview I did with Laura, Kathryn and Emma just after that event on the 10th of March. And so I kicked off by asking Laura just for her reflections on the event and also to give her the opportunity to dig into any of the issues that we maybe didn't get a chance to cover in the event an hour - it's not that long to talk about the big old issue of misogyny. So that's where we'll join the interview.

[00:07:01.710] - Laura Bates
I thought that it was incredibly moving, actually, to have so many people coming together, particularly many women and girls who I think feel extremely affected by the recent events that we've all lived through together. And I felt very moved actually to be in a space of such support and solidarity and to see so many people contributing with their ideas and questions and suggestions. It was a real

moment of hope, which I think I needed very badly. There was a question actually that I did wish that we had the chance to come to about algorithms.

[00:07:32.220] - Alys Mumford
Mmm.

[00:07:32.760] - Laura Bates

So we were talking about online radicalisation and specifically the reach of extremist misogynistic groups online. And one of the questions was about the role that algorithms have played in enabling this. And I think it's an incredibly important question because that's exactly right. That is an area that we have to focus on. I think a lot of people don't recognise this, that the kind of modern machinery of tech platforms is essentially being co-opted as a radicalisation machine. But just to give you an idea of the scale of it, if you look at YouTube, 70 percent of the videos that people watch on YouTube are suggested by the algorithm. In other words, those videos that pop up and it says try watching this next. And in fact, often they start playing automatically without you even having to click on them. In other words, people are watching significantly more content on YouTube that the algorithm has chosen for them than they've actually gone looking for. And that's particularly significant when you realise just how massive YouTube's reaches. There are one point five billion YouTube users. That's more than the number of households internationally that own a television. 90 percent of young people say that they're on there, that they get their news from YouTube in many cases. And if you look at global internet traffic, 37 percent of global internet traffic is accounted for by YouTube. But those two statistics together, and you realise that about a quarter of all global mobile download internet traffic is accounted for by YouTube's deciding which videos people should watch. So suddenly, that is a huge power. I mean, that's a massive, massive level of power to have. And at that point, it becomes really significant that numerous whistle-blowers have come out of YouTube and said that the algorithm is designed explicitly to extend your watch time - like that is the focus of it is to get people watching as long as possible so that they see as many adverts as possible. And the way to do that, studies seem to suggest, is not to serve people the most interesting, the most high quality or the most relevant content. It is to serve them increasingly extreme and shocking content. And when I looked at this for the book, I did a number of experiments with completely clean computers, with no history or cache or anything like that, where I started off with really simple kind of very basic questions like 'what is feminism?' And I started by selecting deliberately a kind of pro feminist, but very much kind of entry level type video. You know, Emma Watson speaking at the UN, that kind of thing. And immediately the next video suggested by YouTube was taking me in the opposite direction. And within ten videos, I'd seen accusations that feminists are man haters, that the gender pay gap is a conspiracy, that false rape allegations are common, and that white men are the real victims of today's society. So that algorithm absolutely served up a kind of slippery slope towards extremism for somebody going in at a very basic entry level looking for information. And when you look at the reach that algorithm has and the power it has as a kind of unregulated private company, that's terrifying.

[00:10:28.440] - Alys Mumford

Absolutely. I think, yeah reading the book that that really struck me. I mean, I've certainly been in situations where, you know, you just you're watching a video and then you just carry on watching because, you know, 2021 and what else is there to do? And then suddenly you sort of come to yourself like, what am I watching? You know, maybe it hasn't gone down that extreme, but it's something that is completely irrelevant to me or something that is questionable. And I think often often sort of brush it off as like, "oh, silly algorithms. I'm not interested in that". Whereas actually they're very clever algorithms that are intended to make money and sell advertising. So, yeah, I think that was a really vital part of the book. And, you know, you talked about young people getting their news from from YouTube and certainly the way we consume culture sort of changing. A lot of actually people not really watching young people not watching TV, but watching these vloggers. Kathryn you're here as the sexual violence prevention coordinator for Rape Crisis Scotland. So have you got any reflections on on this issue of how young people are sort of engaging in the world today and anything else that came up in Laura's talk?

[00:11:34.990] - Kathryn Dawson

Well, I think, you know, just to sort of say how valuable I think it is for us, you know, the network of

prevention workers that are out there talking to young people all the time. And just I think it's so helpful to hear Laura's insights and the recognition of the issue that so many of them recognise and face. I do feel like it's you know, it's so important that there is a much greater recognition of just the sort of, you know, the scale and the magnitude of this issue. And as something that is affecting young people, you know, on a spectrum from those who really, you know, are sort of drawn into those really quite, you know, more sort of deeply misogynistic viewpoints, as well as all the ways the thinking kind of creeps into the mainstream. And a lot of those issues that we recognise and we've always recognised around, you know, belief in false allegations or those being the first places that young people go. When you say something about sexual violence and they go to false allegations or, you know, that that point that Laura was making about, you know, from the Good Lad initiative and the fact that, you know, underneath for a lot of young men that there will be a lot of insecurities around, you know, whether it's about, you know, what what does it mean to be to be a man and what's my masculine identity about or, you know, fears around how how are they supposed to have sexual relationships with girls? And because you know that there's so much emphasis on the risk of being falsely accused that that then sort of becomes heightened in their concerns. So, yeah, I think, you know, just picking up on so many of those points and the sense that we really need a much sort of more more robust and much stronger recognition and strategy of the specifics of this issue. But in the context of the wider issues that we've always been dealing with as well. You know, just thinking about, for example, when we're working, we do a lot of work sort of with schools and education, and there's a lot of readiness to to recognise some of the issues. But it also feels as if it's there's a need to try and fit issues of misogyny and violence against women into sort of existing quite neutral spaces, say within the curriculum or within education, educational policy. And, you know, yes, absolutely we can talk about that alongside a lot of other things...and so the space for it becomes quite small. And it's about trying to fit a big structural gender issue within an infrastructure that isn't really sort of set up or equipped for that or can only sort of deal with it in quite a surface way. So I think that just real kind of strong leadership and recognition of this issue on the scale that it needs to be recognised is just a lot of thoughts that are coming to my mind as I'm as I'm listening and talking to people about these issues.

[00:14:12.580] - Alys Mumford

I think that's a really good point. And it speaks to, I think, something that Talat raised in the event around; it often relies on sort of one motivated person to make these things happen. And certainly in a schools context - Engender doesn't work in schools, but we do get requests - and, you know, it completely varies if it's the modern studies teacher, if it's someone that's involved in student support, you know, there's it's very sort of fragmented and it's often just someone trying to think, how can I shoehorn feminism into my area of work? Whereas actually, of course, it shouldn't need to be shoehorned into these areas. It should be integral to it all. So looking at YouTube, for example, but also the you know, the big international spaces, Reddit, all these places you're talking about in the book Laura, obviously at Engender we tend to focus on the Scottish policy landscape. And and then there's things like the UN which look at international landscapes. But it does seem like there's a big gap with these multinational corporations. How do we how do we tackle that? Where are the levers?

[00:15:08.800] - Laura Bates

I think in terms of recognising the international reach of these issues, we've got to force people to recognise their severity if we want to see international co-operation in tackling them. You can see when you go to the police, for example, with reams of examples of rape and death threats, they look at them and tell you that there's nothing that they can do because the website that they originated from is in the United States, which has happened to me or many other similar situations, that there is often a real lack of willingness to cooperate or to take action across international lines. But we do in some cases when we take things seriously enough. And I think terrorism is a good example of this. So certain forms of terrorism are taken seriously enough that information sharing happens across different jurisdictions and that there are laws in place and processes in place for people to be prosecuted in different places depending on what's happened. Part of the issue, I think, is that we don't recognise what we were talking about today as a form of terrorism. So if we don't recognise men who explicitly go out and slaughter women in the name of extremist misogyny as terrorists, then it's much more difficult to tackle them. To bring people to justice, so it's another reason, I think, why it's important that we label these things and acknowledge them for the severity that they really have.

[00:16:22.090] - Emma Ritch

Yeah, I think we can see what happens when platforms take some kind of content seriously. So if you put up copyrighted content on Twitter or YouTube, then it will come down almost immediately. So I think Laura is absolutely right that where things are taken seriously, then there is always the will for platforms to act really effectively and to develop tools for doing that. I think what struck me in Laura's book is just how much misogyny is kind of hanging off the table when it comes to some of these really egregious forms of harm. So we don't recognise incel terrorism when it's right in front of us. Even though we've now seen the first incel terrorist prosecution in Scotland, it's not included in our strategies. It comes as a real shock to parliamentarians and policy makers when we mention it. We talked a little bit about incel terrorism in some of the work that we did around the Hate Crime Bill. And you could see members of the Scottish Parliament absolutely recoiling at the idea that this was actually a reality. But it's absolutely vital for these large platforms across jurisdictions to fully appreciate the impact that they're having on women right across the world. And so therefore, to act.

[00:17:40.210] - Alys Mumford

And I think that's really interesting, there were some questions asked in the event that we didn't get to around, how do we make people believe it? And I think obviously we should say we're recording this on the 11th of March. So many people obviously still very affected - we've had the news of Sarah Everard's murder and we've seen, again, huge labour by women of highlighting their own experiences in an attempt to plead with men to understand that it is real and it happens to all of us. And of course, we've seen the 'Not All Men' hashtag coming out in force. So even with with all the work you've done, Laura, and even with all of the evidence around, you know, incel terrorism, domestic abuse, people still seem to hold on to this 'lone wolf' sort of idea around white men committing violence. And I don't know if anyone's got any any thoughts, please, on how we how we challenge that, how we can, how we can break that sort of cultural mass denial of it as a problem?

[00:18:37.870] - Laura Bates

Well, I think we have to hold the media to account. I mean, even today, we've seen mainstream media programmes give a platform to people to come on and say that women are hysterical and overreacting. During MeToo we saw the mainstream media again suggesting that it was a witch hunt, that it had gone too far. You've got extremely high profile figures like Donald Trump coming out and saying "it's a very scary time to be a young man". We have these structures, these institutions within our world that absolutely work against us in that effort. So, you know, whether it's the whether it's the electoral machine of the United States, which enables a man who has been accused of sexual assault by multiple women to become elected president, whether it's the confirmation of a man to the Supreme Court who's been accused of sexual violence, institutionally, we are absolutely at a disadvantage in trying to force people to listen. And you can see that because you can see that this outcry, there's this wave of grief and anguish that women have released in the wake of Sarah Everard disappearance. It happens again and again and again and again. You know, this is not the first time in the last few years we've seen countless periods where something has happened, which has prompted this outpouring of women's anger and fury and fear and and sadness and grief alongside their own experiences. And nothing changes. Men say they're shocked. Policymakers say this is terrible. Police say this is an isolated incident and then it will quietens down for a couple of months and the whole cycle starts again. And the only way to break that cycle is to create actual systemic change. Instead of just putting the onus on individual women to be the ones to bear the burden of creating change, individual women are doing an incredibly brave and courageous thing, which is a vital part of the process, and that is forcing us to acknowledge that the problem exists. But that doesn't mean that they have the power to solve the problem. The people with that power are the people who have actual control over the levers of the police, the judiciary, our schools and what young people are taught our universities and the ways in which they treat sexualised violence and our policies around issues like street harassment and abuse of women in public spaces and how we penalise those.

[00:20:47.440] - Emma Ritch

And I think there's a fundamental misapprehension about the scale of the task. So you mentioned earlier on the podcast that Engender doesn't do work in schools and we don't, but we have done some work around education policy. And I think there is an assumption that with a few projects across

Scotland, we can solve the issue of sexism and misogyny in the classroom when actually the reality. The situation is that girls experience almost universally sexual harassment in school settings and that that has a profound effect on the subjects they choose, the jobs they later have, the experience of day to day being in the classroom and their sense of safety and their mental health. And yet we just imagine that, you know, two more projects in Fife are going to resolve all the issues when actually what we need is a really, really profound shift, because there is nothing in any of the data that reassures us that anything has changed from decades before, which is a really grim and commiserating picture for Kathryn and her colleagues to be looking at.

[00:21:53.110] - Kathryn Dawson
Yes.

[00:21:53.110]
[laughter]

[00:21:53.170] - Kathryn Dawson
Yes, yeah. I think, yeah, I couldn't agree more Emma. I think it's just that, you know, there's a sort of a yes - response to the wanting to engage, but nothing like on the scale of, you know, of what is needed, you know, thinking about the conversations that have been had say with sort of leaders in sort of government or education that might say, well, you know, actually, you know, the curriculum speaks about equality and these outcomes are sort of stated or, you know, there's a space within the school sort of self-assessment that how good is our school. And you see, that's the space where schools can tell us what they're doing on gender equality. But actually, do we know what what the data is from the self evaluations? And I'm sure that if we were to look at that, we would find that actually it's not sort of rigorously or robustly, sort of looked at regularly and reported on and that we don't have any sort of really significant high level drivers within the education system that put this at the top of the agenda. And, you know, as I say, that I really recognise how many things are at the top of schools agenda and how difficult that is for, you know, the practitioners on the ground trying to meet so many different kind of priority areas. But I think, you know, in amongst that violence against women and gender equality often just does sort of get squeezed out or fitted into into spaces that aren't really sufficient and aren't really set up for it.

[00:23:15.240] - Alys Mumford
Yeah, that was a very interesting comment. Again, in the event from from an attendee saying they were an English teacher and that they covered issues of gender and sexuality when they were studying Frankenstein, you know, but weren't able to have that conversation, an open conversation outwith that contacts with the boys in their class. And they seemed to not be able to make that link between the sort of the themes that are being talked about in a in a sort of academic setting with the things they're talking about breaktime. So there definitely seems to be a bit of dissonance there. Kathryn, I'm interested, so in the book Laura talks about, you know, one of the motivations for writing the book being that, seeing these these sort of same stock phrases and questions and things coming up in workshops more and more and making it clear that there was a sort of concerted radicalisation of young people happening. Is that something you feel is reflected in the work Rape Crisis has been doing?

[00:24:07.800] - Kathryn Dawson
Yes, absolutely. You know, so we've got a number of prevention workers based in rape crisis centres around Scotland. So they're routinely, you know, going into secondary schools, albeit that's been a bit interrupted due to Covid. But, you know, going in and, you know, using our programme, which looks at issues of consent, gender, understanding, what sexual violence is, you know, really just trying to tackle the main sort of key issues around sexual violence that are really help, you know, equip young people to both to understand it and to know what you know, what their role is in in sort of leading towards a sort of a more just society and healthier sexual relationships. So, you know, colleagues have always had, you know, anybody who's doing any sort of training or education around any of these kinds of issues is used to that very normal kind of, you know, conversations where people, you know, bring up questions or points of view that are just quite sort of reflective of our societal attitudes or, you know, they'll bring the focus to issues of false allegations or they'll be concerned that a focus on violence

against women is ignoring the abuse that men face and, you know, having an inaccurate sort of understanding of the...not recognising there's such a disproportionality in the amounts of violence that women experience.

[00:25:17.430] - Kathryn Dawson

But, you know, just as Laura said, there was sort of over the last sort of probably two to three years, you know, a kind of a marked shift in the nature of some of what they were encountering. And it was, you know, a small number of young men who had just had absolutely very firm views and sometimes quite a sort of a hostile and challenging presentation where they were just very ready to refute and had ready arguments and false statistics and things like that up their sleeve. And that's, you know, sometimes the way that was the way those things were brought were sort of, you know, quite sort of hostile towards the workers themselves. It's, you know, it's obviously going to be quite hostile things are saying and what that will sound like to all the girls and young women that are in their class as well. You know, what they are hearing there and, you know, just really, really challenging sort of dynamically to address that and the fact that it could then sort of dominate and derail the conversation as well and shift away from the things that both, you know, we in terms of our programme, want to be raising with young people and the other young people may have wanted to talk about as well, and it does feel very challenging to to address that and probably a sense that unless you are proactively having these conversations with young people, you might not be quite so aware of the existence of these points of view.

[00:26:29.300] - Alys Mumford

Yeah, and I think it speaks to what lots of us talk around, you know, around our social media bubbles and things that when sometimes when you are confronted with sort of the views of people outwith that and realise how widespread they are. So I think we, you know, we often talk about young people, and obviously Laura you've done a lot of work in education settings. But, you know, do you think age is important in this or do you think...I worry sometimes that we sort of scapegoat young people, and that makes it easier to dismiss that as, 'oh, it's just angry young boys with, you know, hoodies and Doritos stains' rather than, you know, as you as you said Laura, that politicians are involved in this media editors are involved in this, celebrities are involved in this. Yeah. I'd just be interested in people's thoughts on that.

[00:27:10.280] - Laura Bates

Well, yes, I think it's important never to generalise in any in any situation. So I would also add that there are increasing numbers of young men, teenage boys who are really stepping up and wanting to be part of the battle for equality, wanting to be part of tackling sexism. And that's incredibly encouraging to see. I would also say that when we're talking about these issues, when we're talking about young men who are vulnerable to these forms of radicalisation, we are talking about rescuing them, about supporting them, because this is a form of exploitation and grooming of them as well. So, you know, it isn't about writing these young men off or seeing them as the enemy. It's about recognising them as vulnerable victims of exploitation and radicalisation and finding ways to support them. Because, of course, when they become enmeshed in these forms of extremism, the impact on their lives can be devastating, as well as the impact on the lives of the women around them. But I don't think it's necessarily something that we kind of only focus on young men. In fact, sometimes I think the opposite is true. So it's quite common to hear people describe these as kind of dinosaur problems that will die out. You know, it's quite common to hear people say, well, the young generations are all very weak these days. And, you know, this will just - if you're just patient, things will carry on getting better. It's something that's quite frequently and patronisingly said to feminist activists by men in positions of power who want us to just sort of sit back and calm down, dear, essentially, you know, and this was said to me by a very senior MP at an event in the House of Commons where I've been invited to speak about sexism. And he said, you're very glass half empty. You know, huge progress has been made. And you might want to think about making your message more palatable to men if you are to succeed genuinely. This is what he said. [laughter]

[00:28:54.860] - Laura Bates

And the thing is that while obviously it is true that progress has been made, people who use that as an excuse not to do much right now are hoping that we will just sit back and stop making a fuss. But the

reality is that that progress hasn't happened by accident. It hasn't happened automatically. It's happened because generations of women and campaigners and activists have put their blood, sweat and tears into making those gains. So we can't just stop now and expect that things will magically happen on their own. And I think that attitude that these are only attitudes held by a certain older generation of men, which I certainly come up against quite often, is really dangerous because it prevents us from focussing on the fact that these attitudes are really worryingly rife amongst young people every year. The British Attitudes Survey, for example, asks people if they think that a woman was partially or fully responsible for her own rape, if she'd been drinking or flirting before it happened. And every year, the general public, incredibly depressingly, responds affirmatively with around a quarter for one of those and a third for the other. But every year, amongst the youngest age group in the survey, which I think is 18 to 24, those percentages are much higher. So actually we see higher numbers of victim blaming and of kind of myths around false rape allegations amongst young men, I would say then amongst older men. So, so I do think it's important to focus on that group and to focus on the fact that they are digital citizens, you know, their inhabitants of a deeply misogynistic world wallpapered with jokes and banter and memes about sexual violence, with that messaging, about normalising and excusing these forms of violence, really reaching them on a daily basis without them having to go looking for it, but just because it pops up or is suggested by an algorithm or a news feed. And if we don't recognise that they are living in that world and that it may have an impact on some young men's preconceptions and ideas about women, then we're basically sitting on a time bomb that will reach a point where these men emerge into society and become presumably, if nothing's changed by then, the majority of people in leadership roles and then we've got a real problem. So actually, I do think it's important to focus on young people and what they're seeing and how we can support them to challenge that.

[00:31:10.940] - Kathryn Dawson

I suppose one thing that I was thinking just then is how difficult I think people can sometimes find it to talk about, you know, boys and young men as those who may potentially kind of take on these kinds of attitudes, who may potentially perpetrate violence, because we have, I think, you know, some progress towards kind of, you know, children's rights approaches. Quite often from that angle, children will be sort of spoken about just as a sort of a gender neutral group. And there's something about how we can understand that engaging with boys and young men and challenging appropriately and compassionately is absolutely part of protecting children, protecting them as children, protecting girls and young women as children rather than it sort of being seen that, you know, it's uncomfortable for us to think about children as being able to do harm. You know, there's something around that I think that we do really struggle with.

[00:32:06.520] - Alys Mumford

Absolutely. I'm going to start bringing us to a close now with two questions, really. So one is, as was mentioned briefly in the event and Engender, on the Engender regular listeners will know that Emma Ritch sits on an expert working group on misogyny, which the Scottish Government's just announced. What does that group need to cover? So we've already talked about education settings. We've talked about trying to tackle these international corporations and we've talked about representation. Is there anything that that that group absolutely has to look at in order to fully tackle misogyny?

[00:32:37.180] - Laura Bates

I think I would say looking at radicalisation, looking at recognising this formally as a form of radicalisation and grooming and bringing it into line with the same kind of precautions and prevention work that we do to try and protect young people from becoming vulnerable to other forms of radicalisation. And I think recognising that as part and parcel of the epidemic of sexual violence in schools and universities, that continues to go unnoticed. Even though we have the statistics, we know that a third of young women report experiencing unwanted sexual touching, a euphemism for sexual assault at school, even though a recent Freedom of Information request found that there have been 5500 sexual offences, including 600 rapes reported in UK schools in a three year period, which, if you do the maths, equates to one rape per school day being reported to police. And we all know how extremely rare it is for the cases to be reported at all. So you can extrapolate from there. I think really I think my emphasis would be on joining the dots, recognising that these things are connected to everything that has happened this week, whether you're talking about the complete dismissal and

smearing of Meghan Markle, speaking about her lived experiences, whether you're looking at the disappearance of Sarah Everard and the resulting enormous victim blaming, whether you're looking at that statistic that 97 percent of young people have been sexually harassed in public space, wherever you look, these aren't isolated incidents. They are all connected. And if we don't recognise the connexions between them and between the normalised daily attitudes towards women and behaviours towards women that are emboldened by our media, by our policy makers, by the gaps in our policies, then we will never be able to tackle it unless we have a joined up approach.

[00:34:22.240] - Alys Mumford

Thank you, Laura. That just brought home the irony of all those things happening when on Monday was International Women's Day and we have lots of people celebrating the wonderful women in their workplaces, even though they're in the minority, etc. etc., which didn't seem to get us far beyond midnight in thinking that women were, were equal in any way. So the the final question before we move on to our recommendations is - we touched on it briefly, the sort of the sort of unpaid labour that women do all the time and the labour you put into this book, Laura, because nobody else was doing it. Law enforcement didn't think it was a problem. Education didn't think it was a problem. Men don't think it's a problem, which I'm sure you must have found incredibly frustrating. But a question that was asked many times in the event was, what keeps you going? So both the bit of hope - Talat asked you, what gave you hope at the end, and you talked about some of the amazing young people that are doing things to make change. But people lots of people are also asking from a personal perspective, do you do you have your support network? How do you look after yourself? How do you cope with dealing with this sort of overwhelming situation day after day? So I think for all for all three of you, it'd be good to know if there's any practical tips and hints or sort of warm words for people that are feeling like they maybe don't have the strength to keep fighting against this every day.

[00:35:48.580] - Laura Bates

Well, first of all, I'd say that you're not alone. There are thousands of us standing alongside you and fighting this tooth and nail with everything that we've got. And if there are days when it feels too much, it's okay to take a step back. It's okay to take a break. It's okay to look after yourself. If that's what you need to do in that moment, you know, you sometimes need to do that. You are living in a world which is systemically, institutionally misogynistic, racist and so on, and and it's okay to look after yourself and to let somebody else pick up the baton for a while. In my experience, the thing the single most helpful thing for me is a network of close friends and colleagues who are women working in similar situations or who have experienced similar things because there are days when they are the only people who can really, truly get it. But it's an ongoing process. You know, I don't want to sit here and say, "oh, I fixed it. I found the secret solution for how you endure this day in, day out and just kind of cope and carry on". Because the truth is that there are some days when you don't cope and nobody should have to. And the truth is, what I really hope is that we will eventually get to a point where we focus on stopping these things from happening in the first place rather than women having to learn the mechanisms, the coping mechanisms to survive them.

[00:37:09.650] - Alys Mumford

Thanks, Laura. Emma, anything from you on that?

[00:37:12.290] - Emma Ritch

Yeah, I mean, I think I think very similarly: a group of women who understand your work in your life and your passion and your activism is the thing that really, really helps to keep going. But I absolutely echo Laura on: 'take a break when you need to take a break'. That's a radical act sometimes, but we're a movement - it's not all of us as individuals. We're together in this work and this endeavour, and I think sometimes that's the only thing that makes it tolerable, really. And to celebrate our successes, it's horrible in weeks like this, it feels like we've achieved nothing and come nowhere. But we have made change, all of us together. And so to reflect on that and to celebrate that, I think can be quite powerful sometimes.

[00:37:58.040] - Alys Mumford

Thanks, Emma, and also thank you for successfully getting Hamilton stuck in my head after a full day of not having 'take a break' in my head. [laughter] Kathryn?

[00:38:09.740] - Kathryn Dawson

Maybe also just that, you know, recognising the ways that being, you know, the ways it can make people feel individually, you know, that they're not being articulate enough or they're not getting the argument right or, you know, they're not being persuasive enough or whatever, you know, the more kind of resistance that they meet. And I think, yes, when you're having these conversations with, you know, with sisters who understand that, that can so help in kind of validating and actually, you know, that it's not that you haven't whatever, you know, been articulate enough, done enough, etc. It's because of the amount of, sort of, just the challenges that you're facing, I suppose. And maybe the other thing to add is that there are different ways that people can contribute to this. You know, we can't all be, you know, amazing speakers on the forefront or being at the coalface of talking to people about these issues all the time. It's okay to have whatever role you want to have. So you might be somebody who's kind of, I don't know, doing some of the sort of supporting work behind the scenes or, you know, being there to support your colleagues who are facing these things. You know, it's okay to do what is the right role for you in this and to not feel that what you're giving isn't enough.

[00:39:16.820] - Alys Mumford

Yeah, brilliant point. Oh, I feel uplifted by all that. Really good, really good points all. Thank you. We, we're going to leave the podcast now, but obviously folks will be able to access a recording of the event that Laura spoke out. That'll be in the show notes. And we'll also link to where you can find out more information about Laura's book and other works, and everything else that we've mentioned in this episode. We like to leave the podcast with a recommendation from our guests. So that could be some further reading, a YouTube video you want to watch, (but then not watch the next recommended video). A Twitter account or just something frivolous and fun, whatever that might be. Who wants to go first?

[00:39:54.390] - Kathryn Dawson

I'll make an offering. Spend time with the furry creatures, by which I mean animals, because if I just think about how much how much light they have brought to us at zoom meetings, how precious they are to so many of us, how they understand us without us having to think of words to say. So if you've got them, if you like them, or if you've got a friend's one you could borrow spend time with the furry creatures.

[00:40:16.490] - Alys Mumford

Excellent. Maybe I'll put a photo of Daisy and Henry in the shownotes as well for people that need to see some cats because they've heard them scratching enough times on this podcast. Laura, have you got a recommendation for our listeners?

[00:40:28.280] - Laura Bates

Yes. And I did have a fun, frivolous one, but I'm so sorry, the last couple of days have just driven me right out of that particular mindset. So instead, I want to recommend three books about women's anger and how incredibly powerful it can be and important they are. Eloquent Rage by Brittney Cooper, Good and Mad by Rebecca Traister. And Rage Becomes Her by Soraya Chemaly. Because I think if ever there was a moment when we needed to be allowed to own and to harness the power of women's rage, this is it.

[00:41:00.890] - Alys Mumford

A great, great recommendations. Emma.

[00:41:03.740] - Emma Ritch

So obviously you should all read Laura Bates book, Men Who Hate Women, but also a set of feminist essays that I've read recently and really enjoyed. They're queer feminist essays, they're so affirming and delightful: Against Memoir by Michelle Tea. I really recommend. Thanks. What a great reading list to have. Yes. And we'll link to that in the shownotes. My recommendation is, and I don't normally do this, but I'm going to recommend people join Engender, partly because we put recommendations to really interesting things at the bottom of our weekly email to members. And it's always really great to get recommendations from folks on Twitter, people e-mailing us of interesting writing, new briefings

and things that have come out. And we we bundle them up and send them on. So if you're not already a member of Engender, then join us - we're a good bunch.

[00:42:00.240] - Alys Mumford

So that was my chat with Laura, Kathryn and Emma, and it really was such a privilege to be able to do that and to be able to share this recording with you all. So I hope you enjoyed it. Amanda, we were really gutted you could join us, but you know, houses have got to be moved into. So it means you didn't get a chance to do a recommendation. Is there anything you'd like to recommend to our listeners? We obviously got a lot of very worthwhile book recommendations in the outro, which I have already ordered, which is very exciting, the ones I hadn't already read. So, yeah, anything you want to add to the mix?

[00:42:34.740] - Amanda Stanley

Yeah, there was a lot of really good recommendations of books in there, especially Laura's ones about rage and yeah, definitely be looking them up as well and ordering a copy of a couple of the different ones that were mentioned. Something that I wanted to recommend was - I actually posted it this morning for us all in our work chat - Gloria Steinem has collaborated with Google to do a kind of 'walking inside Google Map tour' of her home in New York and I looked at it this morning whilst having my first cup of coffee and it was such a beautiful insight into her home, but also her personal archive and lots of things from her activism. And it was such a such a nice house. So, yeah, such a nice interactive page for you to go and have a look through so you can wander through her home. But also there's lots of really cool recordings of people like Alice Walker and stuff like that, reading poems that are like featured in her home and all this kind of thing. So it's more than just her. It's really it's really cool. So and that's quite nice to take a little 20 minutes out from your day and have a little nosey around Gloria Steinem's house.

[00:43:39.750] - Alys Mumford

That's super cool and we will put a link to that in the show notes. The reason I laughed when you first said that Amanda, is because I had missed that message and I thought you were going to talk about the Muppet Christmas Carol being performed live in concert in Glasgow, which you also posted on our work slack this morning. And I was like, "yes, cracking recommendation. Everyone should go", but also a bit fearty that people would book a ticket before I booked mine and that it would get booked out. So, yeah, two for the price of one there. Two recommendations.

[00:44:08.050] - Amanda Stanley

Yeah I didn't want to bring the Christmas recs in in March, but we've done it now so...

[00:44:14.250] - Alys Mumford

I mean it's 2021, March in Christmas? I mean Christmas in March? Why not.

[00:44:19.590] - Amanda Stanley

Yeah, totally. Yeah. That all sounds great.

[00:44:22.980] - Alys Mumford

We really hope you enjoyed listening to that and of course we will, as I said at the start, we'll link to the video as well in the show notes. Do check out Laura's book - I've already recommended it twice on this podcast accidentally. So hopefully you've all read it or listened to it by now anyway. But we will be back with you soon, talking about Scottish feminist policy. And until then, stay safe.

[00:44:55.460] - Amanda Stanley

This episode of on the Engender featured the voices of Laura Bates, Kathryn Dawson, Emma Ritch and Alys Mumford and was produced by myself, Amanda Stanley, on behalf of Engender. The jingle featured throughout was written and performed by Bossy Love. To find out more about the work of Engender head to Engender.scot and be sure to follow us on Twitter [@Engenderscot](https://twitter.com/Engenderscot) and click subscribe to this podcast so you can keep up to date with every episode.